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OUR

MISSIONARY SOCIETY

OF THE

Methodist Episcopal Church.

BY

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MISSIONARY SOCIETY

OF THE

Methodist Episcopal Church.

ORGANIZED 1819.

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OUR Missionary Society.

1. WHAT IS IT?

IT is the CHURCH itself acting in a corporate capacity for the establishment and support of missions in our own and in other lands. All the agents for carrying on this work are appointed by the highest authority of the Church—the General Conference—and are made amenable to it. This is true of Treasurers, Secretaries, Board of Managers, and General Committee. There is an important difference between this method of doing this work and that which commits it to an organization outside of the Church, however closely allied to it. It is manifest that for all that is done the entire Church

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is responsible, and not the local administration. Indeed, the local missionary administration of the Methodist Episcopal Church has exceedingly limited powers. It cannot establish a mission, nor can it of itself appropriate to any object even a dollar. These things must be done by the General Committee. It appoints no missionaries. To do this is the province of the Bishops. It cannot even elect its own executive officers. Nothing is clearer, therefore, than that in a most emphatic way responsibility for the missionary cause rests upon every member of the Church. It is *our* work. The missions and missionaries are *ours*, and the glorious fruitage is also *ours*, through Christ.

2. WHAT IS ITS FIELD?

“The field is the world!” Have we any right to limit it? According to the report for 1876 there are 2,555 ministers in destitute fields within the United States, supported in whole or

in part by this Society. In foreign lands the Society had then 1,235 missionaries of various grades and kinds, assistants, local preachers, exhorters, teachers, native and foreign. These minister to an aggregate membership of the Church of 817,531 souls speaking a foreign tongue, and the many more thousands who speak the English language. The appropriations of the General Committee to missions without the United States for the last ten years is, in the aggregate, \$2,759,433 43, and the appropriation to missions within the United States for the same period was \$3,683,622 90; being an average of \$275,943 34 per year for missions without the United States, and \$368,362 29 for missions within the United States—that is, four sevenths of the funds to work within the United States to three sevenths without. Here is opportunity for the most generous contributions of the most ardent lover of either of these classes of missions.

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This Society, by its agents, is the most dreaded antagonist of the vile system prevailing in Utah, and of the Spanish Romanism of New Mexico and Arizona. It follows the miners into the gulches and over the hills of Nevada, Montana, Idaho, and Dakota. It proclaims salvation to the red sons of the forest. It aids feeble Churches in the suburbs of our growing cities. It cares for the Chinese, now entering into our population. It is present in Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, inspiring spiritual life in the dead formalism that prevails there. It is in Italy, setting up a throne for Him into whose seat "the Man of Sin" has crept, and is redeeming republics in South America and our "next-door neighbor" from this thralldom. It is gaining glorious victories over Buddhism, Brahmanism, Tauism, and Sintoism in the Orient. It is washing away the blackness of nude heathenism in Africa. It has already girdled the world, and its march is yet onward.

The chief object of this Society is to furnish the living preacher to those who are without the Gospel. The Church Extension, Freedmen's Aid, and Educational Societies are its noble coadjutors. But in foreign lands it has to do the work of all these, since they confine themselves to the United States and Territories. More than this. The missionaries have to care for the bodies as well as souls of the people, and hence in heathen lands our industrial schools, orphanages, and hospitals are every-where to be found.

3. IS IT EXPENSIVE?

It accomplishes its object by the means of money, which must in some way be collected and disbursed. Are the methods of doing this costly or wasteful? By the economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church the missionary collections are made literally without any cost. The "Book of Discipline" declares "the support of missions is com-

mitted to the Churches, congregations, and societies as such." The pastors and the people do the work of raising missionary money for themselves, without any "agents" paid by the Society. Some eight thousand pastors, with their respective congregations, in this way last year collected \$566,765 66, and actually paid it into the treasury of the Society, without costing the Society a single cent.

It costs scarcely more to disburse this large sum. Through the Bishops and Presiding Elders all the appropriations to domestic missions are distributed without any charge to the Society. In each foreign mission some one of the missionaries having business talents is made Treasurer, and, in addition to his work as a missionary, intrusted with the distribution of the moneys of the mission, and with keeping the accounts, for which he receives no compensation. This is the case in all the missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Liberia alone excepted,

where a competent business man is the Treasurer, and is paid a small sum for his services.

The Society has no clerks nor book-keepers. The Book Agent of the Church has always been the Treasurer, and his services are entirely gratuitous. He employs the clerks of the Book Concern so far as he needs them, and a small allowance is made to the Book Concern for this service.

All is arranged on principles of strictest economy. The only salaried officers of the Society are two Corresponding Secretaries, who unite all the various parts of the machinery together, and give it impulse, and keep it running in order and harmony; and the Recording Secretary, who remains in the office when they are absent, and aids them at all times in their duties. It is possible that, ere long, to this force will be added some stated editorial help, which heretofore has been afforded occasionally.

These arrangements, which our

Church organization so happily enables us to make, will explain what some have been scarcely able to comprehend, but it is nevertheless true, that the cost of "running" the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church is at most but three per cent. of the disbursements. So, of every dollar contributed for this cause at least ninety-seven cents go directly to the missions. Three cents are consumed as for postage, to send it there.

Nor are the missionaries paid extravagantly. Our greatest force in the foreign field now is native. In Asia the salaries of native helpers will vary from \$25 to \$100 each, and in Europe, Africa, Mexico, and South America, from \$150 to \$500 each, while American brethren abroad receive from \$500 to \$1,500, depending on expensiveness of situation and size of family. There are exceptional cases in which the salary is greater than that named, but they are few, indeed, and isolated, and the necessity for the exception is apparent

to those who have scrutinized the case. In all instances the congregations are expected to contribute what they are able toward the salary.

4. DO MISSIONS PAY ?

The missionary work possesses in a remarkable degree an inherent power to kindle piety into a flame, and to promote the finest affections of a regenerated soul. It is charity in its broadest and best manifestations—and “the greatest of these is charity.” It is the very essence of disinterestedness. It is faith, soaring through all ages and all lands. It is the springing up in the soul of living waters for the refreshment of all mankind, but for its own, as well. The missionary spirit gauges the divine life in the human soul, and grows with its spiritual growth. It has always improved the degree and quality of the piety of the Church. It more closely identifies us with Christ in the one great project he has in hand, of

subduing this world. In a thousand ways the Church is better for doing the missionary work. The spray that falls upon her own bosom as she attempts to irrigate the desert brings to her a world of beauty and fruitage. Enriched in grace and increased in power, the Church is abundantly paid for this outgoing of its heart from itself to the lost, and toward the great Redeemer.

But the pay is, also, in kind. The Gospel of Christ has been found to be an effectual agent in civilizing men. But civilization brings increased wants: want of better homes, better raiment, conveniences of every kind, implements of toil, paper, books, etc. It also leads to industrial pursuits, mechanic arts, agriculture, and commerce. In a word, missions have a natural tendency to increase both production and consumption, and upon these the wealth of the world depends. If this be so, we may be the richer for what we expend on missions.

It has been estimated that for every pound sterling spent by Great Britain on missions she receives ten in return. In 1870 the commerce of the United States with the Sandwich Islands was \$4,406,426, the profits of which were \$660,964, or more than half of the entire sum expended for Christianizing these Islands. Up to 1869, Dr. Anderson says the cost of the missions to the Sandwich Islands was \$1,200,000.

The commerce between the British possessions in Africa and the ports of New England during the year ending June 30, 1871, amounted to \$2,671,931. The profit on this, calculated at 15 per cent., would be \$400,785, or more than all the Methodisms of the continent spent the same year for foreign missions. Should the Gospel tide flood all that dark continent, what untold wealth would float to us on the returning wave!

The Modoc war cost at least a million of dollars. All this to subdue a few Indians. Rev. J. H. Wilbur, at

Yakima, and Rev. J. L. Burchard, at Round Valley, and others in other parts of our frontier, were at the same time bringing a far greater number of similar savages under the Gospel, and literally beating their "swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks," so that they will not "learn war any more." All this at the cost of a few hundreds of dollars a year. These Indians now want houses, clothing, agricultural and mechanical implements, and books, for which they pay us in grain and fruit of their own producing. Add the saving to us from pillage, fire, and bloodshed, and put the whole to the credit side of Christian missions. Such cases might be multiplied indefinitely.

We cannot now pause to tell the net literary recompense that Christian nations have received for their expenditures on missions. Works have been produced by missionaries on exploration, travels, ethnology, climatology, hieroglyphy, natural history, geology,

mineralogy, botany, languages, and many other subjects—enough to make a vast library, and without which the world would be immensely poorer. Moffat, Livingstone, and other missionaries, have been chief of all explorers in opening up the continent of Africa. The return in this direction is incalculable.

But there are grander and more Christ-like views than these to be taken of Christian missions. Suppose no personal remuneration came to ourselves, either spiritual or pecuniary, for all their cost, but that it could be shown that an immense tide of human suffering had been arrested in its flow of agony, and that the ranks of angels had been filled with thousands that, for aught we know, must have been unsaved but for the missionary. Would not this pay?

Christianity has extinguished the fires of the suttee, and stupefied widows are no longer consumed with the dead bodies of their husbands; babes are

no more cast to the crocodiles of the Ganges ; the criminality of female infanticide is becoming understood ; the horrors of female servitude are being ameliorated from the Zenana to the Bazar ; the torture of female infants, by which the feet of women are so sadly deformed in China, is beginning to be arrested ; the poison-test for criminals has disappeared as Christianity advances ; and many more of the cruelties of heathenism abated. No mere humanitarianism is so effectual as missions in remedying the ignorance and woes of mankind. If they have wrought no other work than this work of humanity they are worth all they have cost.

But the spiritual results of missions are very satisfactory. It would be a great error to count them by mere statistics. We know that the seed sown is vital, and we should have faith in the seed and in the Lord of the harvest, and patiently wait for the fruit. Delay in its coming to the surface is

but natural. For thirty-three years in Madagascar, from 1828 to 1861, the seed was growing secretly but surely, and amazed the world when they saw it. In Syria, where the American Board labored so long and patiently with but little fruit, now it would seem as if the whole Greek Church would come over soon *en masse* to Protestantism. In India, we are told, the false religious systems of the land are all honeycombed through the teachings of missionaries, and may fall any day, yielding the land to the all-conquering Christ. For a hundred miles around Monrovia the influence of our schools and Churches in Liberia can be clearly recognized, modifying the savagery and disgusting baseness that abound; yet our tables do not show this. Though the converts in Japan are as yet few, every part of every island has felt the presence of Christianity. It is no small thing to thus penetrate the life of a people, and this is often done where it cannot be tabulated.

But we do not shrink from the test, however unjust, that divides the dollars we have spent by the members in our statistics, to determine how much it has cost to turn a single soul from paganism. But try the same method in Christian lands, and it will be found that for every dollar spent in heathen lands we have as much, and even more, yield in souls converted than in Christian lands. “The number added to the Presbyterian Church in 1870 on profession of faith, compared with the whole membership was six per cent.; the gain of foreign missions, as a whole, was twelve per cent.” for the same period, while in individual missions the gain was double this. After presenting the figures in detail, Dr. Irving says : “We have, then, this remarkable fact, that, taking the growth of the Presbyterian Church in the United States as a fair indication of the aggregate increase of the whole evangelical Church in it, and we have the growth of the mission Churches *three and a*

half times greater, with one third of the ministerial force."

Methodism is not a whit behind others in the prosperity of her missions. The gain in India for the ten years preceding 1872, when the Allahabad Convention carefully collected the statistics of Hindostan, was five hundred per cent. In Liberia—not accounted our most promising or fruitful field—with constantly diminishing aid from the Missionary Society, and the almost cessation of immigration from America—the Methodist Episcopal Church has steadily advanced in numbers, reporting in 1877, 2,488 members, the largest number ever reported. When the General Committee met in November, 1872, the Methodist Episcopal Church had not a single minister or member in Italy, Japan, or Mexico. Now, in 1877, we have 15 congregations, 14 ministers, and 601 members in Italy. There are 15 congregations, with an attendance of 1,100, and a membership of 667 in Mexico. In Japan we have 12

native preachers, and 224 members. In 1845 Pastor Hedstrom came to the city of New York, and with Peter Bergner as his only member, began our Scandinavian work. There are now, in 1877, embracing the work on both sides of the Atlantic, 170 ministers and 8,518 members. Our German work is in some respects still more remarkable. If the Gospel has anywhere had an adequate return, it has been from the missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

5. WILL WE SUCCEED?

Forgive us, our Father, the weakness that asks such a question ! Did Christ send us on a bootless errand when he bade us "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature ?" Will his word fail, and the Son not receive "the heathen for his inheritance ?" Will he not "draw all men unto him ?" Shall not "every knee bow and every tongue confess him Lord ?"

Must He be forever unsatisfied because he has not seen of "the travail of his soul?" Were not the isles waiting for him that he might take them up as a very little thing? Has he not done it? And does it take much faith to believe that he who has given us this earnest of his veracity will ere long bring continents to himself? Within fifty years, more than three hundred islands of the Polynesian group have renounced idolatry. Less than a century ago Australia was peopled by savages; now its 2,000,000 of people are Christians. So close is the triumph of Christ to the border of paganism, that in the Fiji Islands there are men in pulpits who remember the taste of human flesh. The Church of Madagascar has been born within the century, and her endurance has been tested by fiercest martyrdoms, and she has come forth like gold refined. The world does not record a single victory of this kind for any other than Christ. Education, agriculture, the mechanic arts, civilization,

humanitarianism, one or all of them are not able to point to a single nation or tribe that has been elevated through such appliances alone; but the Gospel brings them all in its train. The Gospel is the last hope of our world. The race may well despair if the Church fails to be missionary.

RESULTS.

The communicants in the mission Churches throughout the world are geographically distributed as follows :

Africa, including Madagascar.. .. .	130,000
Europe, includ'g Scandinavia and Germany	53,500
Asia.....	120,000
Polynesia	70,000
America, North and South.....	21,500
West Indies....	105,000
Total.....	500,000

It is estimated that in the last fifty years more than 1,500,000 members have been gathered into foreign mission Churches.

DUTIES OF THE PREACHER IN CHARGE.

1. To see that each Sunday-school is organized into a Missionary Society. Dis., ¶ 258.

2. To act efficiently as Chairman of the Committee on Missions for his charge. Dis., ¶ 264.

3. To provide for the diffusion of missionary intelligence to the Church and congregation. Dis., ¶ 266.

4. To institute a Monthly Missionary Concert for Missions. Dis., ¶ 267.

5. To call in person, or by a collector, upon every person in his congregation for a contribution to missions, and to keep a record of the same in a book, and report the same to the Annual Conference. Dis., ¶¶ 268 and 269.

6. To preach at least once a year on the subject, and take a public collection, with special injunction to give a whole day to the cause of missions. Dis., ¶ 270.

BEQUESTS AND DEVISES

TO THE
MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Persons making bequests to the Society by will are requested to observe the following form :—

I give and bequeath to " THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH," incorporated by the Legislature of the State of New York, the sum of \$ -----
and the receipt of the Treasurer thereof shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors for the same.

If it be a devise of land the following form should be observed :—

I give and devise to " THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH," incorporated by the Legislature of the State of New York, the following lands and premises, that is to say : -----

To have and to hold the same, with the appurtenances, to the said Society, its successors and assigns forever.